

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 41-43, 48-51, 56-59, 69-79 and 81.

Please amend claims 39, 54, 60, 67, and 80 as shown below.

39. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sealing a passage through tissue,

comprising:

an elongate shaft having a proximal end and a distal end; and

an opening in the proximal region of the elongate shaft.

a plug member disposed on the distal end of the elongate shaft, the elongate shaft having a cross-section that is substantially smaller than a cross-section of the plug member, and

an opening in the distal region of said plug.

wherein said plug member and said elongate shaft have a lumen therein which extends from the opening in the distal region end of said plug to the opening in the proximal region end of said elongate shaft.

40. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the plug member is at least partially tapered at its distal end.

41-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 39, further comprising at least one of a hemostasis-promoting material and an infection-resistant material secured to a distal end of the plug member.

45. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the plug member is releasable from the elongate shaft.

46. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the elongate shaft comprises an actuator for releasing the plug member from the distal end of the elongate shaft.

47. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 45, further comprising cooperating connectors on the distal end of the elongate shaft and on the plug member for releasably securing the plug member to the distal end of the elongate shaft.

48-51. (Cancelled)

52. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the plug member comprises bioabsorbable material.

53. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the plug member is substantially permanently attached to the distal end of the elongate shaft.

54. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the elongate shaft is provided with a seal for selectively sealing the lumen.

55. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 54, wherein the seal is disposed on the proximal end of the elongate shaft.

56-59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sealing a passage through tissue, comprising:

an elongate shaft having a proximal end and a distal end; and

an opening in the proximal region of the elongate shaft,

a plug member substantially permanently attached to the distal end of the elongate shaft,

and

an opening in the distal region of said plug,

wherein said plug member and said elongate shaft have a lumen therein which extends from the opening in the distal end region of said plug to the opening in the proximal end region of the elongate shaft.

61. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the plug member is at least partially tapered at its distal end.

62. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the plug member comprises a cavity in its distal end.

63. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 62, further comprising at least one of a hemostasis-promoting material and an infection-resistant material disposed in the cavity.

64. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 63, wherein the material comprises intestinal submucosa.

65. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 60, further comprising at least one of a hemostasis-promoting material and an infection-resistant material secured to a distal end of the plug member.

66. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the plug member comprises bioabsorbable material.

67. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the elongate shaft is provided with a seal for selectively sealing the lumen.

68. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 67, wherein the seal is disposed on the proximal end of the elongate shaft.

69-79. (Cancelled)

80. (Previously Amended) An apparatus for sealing a passage through tissue, comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end having a connector thereon; and

a plug member releasably secured to the distal end of the elongate member by the connector, the plug member comprising a helical thread on its outer surface, the elongate member having a cross-section that is substantially smaller than a cross-section of the plug member,

wherein said plug member and said elongate shaft have a lumen therein which extends from the distal end of said plug to the proximal end of said elongate shaft.

81. (Cancelled)

82. (Previously added) An apparatus for sealing a passage through tissue,

comprising:

an elongate member having a proximal end and a distal end; and

a plug member substantially permanently attached to the distal end of the elongate shaft, the plug member comprising a helical thread on its outer surface, the elongate member having a cross section that is substantially smaller than a cross section of the plug member, wherein said plug member and said elongate shaft have a lumen therein which extends from the distal end of said plug to the proximal end of said elongate shaft.